

Amendment Under 37 CFR 1.111
09/987,377

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Replacement sheets Figure. 4, Figures 5A and 5B.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet(s)

REMARKS

Claims 1-16, all the claims pending in the application, stand rejected. Claims 1-4, 6, 8-10, 11-14 and 16 are amended. This amendment is intended to limit the present invention to the case where a series of images are output in one screen of a film, a display or the like as shown in fig. 5A and described in the specification on page 13, line 23 to page 16, line 16. Claim 9 has been made independent and claim 16 has been made dependent on claim 9. Claim 7 has been cancelled and the dependency of other claims adjusted accordingly.

Drawings

The Examiner objects to the drawings because words in Figs. 4 and 5a are misspelled. The Examiner suggests certain changes to the drawings, which Applicants have accepted. Replacement drawings are submitted with the present amendment.

Claim Objections

Claims 3 and 8 are objected to because a phrase in each claim appears "ungrammatical." Applicant has endeavored to remove this basis for objection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 5-11 and 14-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Muller (6,787,331) in view of Bae (2003/0228041A1). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

As now amended, the invention of claims 1, 3 and 5 involves a medical image processing method, while the invention of claims 6, 8-11 and 14-16 involves a medical image processing apparatus, wherein captured images can be processed and displayed with a layout and format that is predetermined on the basis of the original photographing conditions and stored control information. As already noted, the amendment limits the present invention to the case where a series of images are output in one screen of a film, a display or the like as shown in fig. 5A and described in the specification on page 13, line 23 to page 16, line 16.

Muller et al. discloses a method and device for taking radiographic images. The device comprises a means of emission of an X-ray beam and a means of reception of the X-ray beam

after it has passed through an organ to be studied. Advantageously, the device comprises a means capable of returning the image by rotation about an axis perpendicular to the plane of the image and/or by rotation about an axis contained in the plane of the image (column 7, lines 4-8). However, in this reference, it is not disclosed that a layout is automatically constructed when a series of images are to be output in one screen.

Bae et al discloses a method and apparatus for compressing computed tomography raw image data. The method includes the steps of taking image data with a CT scan, stripping away any proprietary frame of reference data, compressing the data using a compression software such as JPEG-LS, and then storing or transmitting the data over a network or the like to another computer or storage/display device. Further, there may be digital information mixed in with the scan signal measurements, such as data recording the table position, gantry angle position, amplifier gain factor, etc., of each measurement line ([0030] lines 13-17). However, in this reference, it is not disclosed that plural kinds of image data representing a series of images and respective photographing conditions are received when the series of images are obtained.

By contrast, according to claim 1 or 6, plural kinds of image data representing a series of images and respective photographing conditions are received when the series of images are obtained. Further, output-format control information corresponding to the received photographing conditions is obtained from a predetermined set of output-format control information to be used to control an image format when the series of images are to be output in one screen. And then, a layout of the series of images to be output in one screen is automatically constructed on the basis of the obtained output-format control information.

With regard to claim 16, the claim has been amended to be dependent on claim 9 and to emphasize the automatic construction of a series of images on one screen. Clearly, this is not shown in Muller or Bae.

Claims 4, 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Muller (6,687,331) in view of Bae et al (2003/0228041A1) and further in view Nields (6,459,935). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

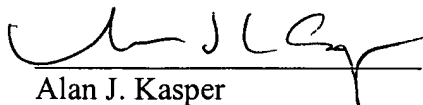
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The Examiner notes that the limitations in the parent claim are disclosed in Muller and Bae, but admits that the combination does not expressly disclose the ability to preview and adjust an image to be output on film, as recited in the rejected claims. As already demonstrated, the features of the amended claims are not found in Muller or Bae et al, taken alone or in combination. The Examiner looks to Nields for an ability to preview an adjusted image, with reference to Fig. 17, where review, zoom and then squeeze is provided. The Examiner notes that Nields is primarily concerned with ultrasound images but discloses that the product may be used for both x-ray and ultrasound (col. 7, lines 5 and 9). Notably, however, Nields et al does not remedy the deficiencies in Muller or Bae et al as noted previously.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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